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ABSTRACT

Different views on the future of research libraries are presented in this collection of papers from persons affiliated with the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany. Joseph Z. Nitecki (library director) discusses the effect of social change on library missions, operations, and procedures. Warren F. Ilchman (vice president for research and educational development) calls upon university librarians to take on a more assertive leadership role because their general view of the entire university is important. Cynthia Mather (graduate student) describes her use of libraries throughout her life and suggests that all levels of people in the university should have the ability to use libraries well. Richard S. Halsey (dean of the library school) traces the progression in library roles through the archival, bibliographic, circulating, duplicating/dispensing, and electronic stages; describes the fragmentation caused by telecommunication and computer technologies; and suggests that research libraries renew their scholarly intent. Martin Kanes (a faculty member in the humanities) describes his early library experiences, discusses browsing as an intellectual activity, and distinguishes between knowledge/learning and gathering information. Notes on the authors are provided. (ESR)

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# Future of Libraries

**A Panel Discussion by Librarians, Administrators, Faculty, and Students**

**Papers from the Millionth Volume Celebration**

**September 24, 1982**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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# INTRODUCTION

As Chair of the Millionth Volume Celebration Committee, it is my great pleasure to present these papers as a publication. The papers were given as part of a panel discussion during the Millionth Volume Celebration Program on September 24, 1982. The panel's topic was the future of libraries, and was chaired by Carol A. Nemeyer, President of the American Library Association.

Different views on the future of libraries are posed by a library director, a vice president, a graduate student, a dean of a library school, and a faculty member in the humanities, upon the occasion of the University Libraries of the State University of New York at Albany acquiring its millionth volume. A common thread among the papers is the use made of computer technology, particularly how it is used within research libraries. The sophisticated technology of the 1980's, including on-line catalogs, and databases, computer systems for acquiring, cataloging, storing, circulating, and delivering information, has created new bibliographic techniques. These techniques have changed the way libraries function and have changed the way libraries are approached by students, faculty, librarians, and administrators.

Joseph Nitecki points out how the social changes over the past thirty years caused libraries to redesign their mission which led to change in library operations and procedures. Collections expanded rapidly and acquisition processing was

computerized. Resource sharing and interloan cooperation took place, and now these activities are engaged in by most libraries in their efforts to provide information to users. The growth of education and its concomitant needs gave rise to new demands for library services.

Warren Ilchman calls upon university librarians in research libraries to take on a more assertive leadership role in response to the faculty and administrative view of looking at library materials from a particular specialization. Librarians, he posits, have a general view of the whole which is important to the community of scholars using research libraries.

Cynthia Mazer illustrates her use of libraries as a young girl reading first for pleasure and then for satisfying her intellectual curiosity. Her experiences as a student, teaching assistant, and researcher gave her differing insights into the use of libraries. She focuses on her concern that all levels of people in the university, from the undergraduate, graduate, scholar and faculty member, should have the ability to use libraries well since the life of the university is affected by that ability.

Richard Halsey traces the different roles that libraries have assumed from collection gathering and disseminating, acquiring and preserving, to circulating and educating. He notes the educational role that libraries need to play with scholars. For him the electronic telecommunications and the computer technologies have led to fragmentation. Halsey ends with a suggestion

that research libraries renew their scholarly intent.

Martin Kanes sees browsing as an intellectual activity and distinguishes learning and knowledge from gathering information. He recaptures his early library experiences as a young boy perched on a ledge in an old fashioned library intimately associated with the books around him; for Kanes these experiences were intellectual and helped lead him into the world of scholarship.

These papers address the theme of the future of research libraries in a provocative fashion. It is hoped that they will provide material for a stimulating discussion beyond that of their original purpose.

Anne Roberts
Communications Projects Librarian

"Introduction: Some Reflections on the Past and Future"

by

Joseph Z. Nitecki, Director of University Libraries

Although there is nothing magical in an acquisition of a millionth volume library collection, it is, nevertheless, a very important event for us here at SUNY Albany. It allows us to stop for a moment and reflect on the past history of our institution, and acknowledge contributions of nameless staff members whose commitment and work led to the millionth volume addition to our collections. Today's occasion also calls for a brief look into the future, a theme of our panel discussion. Before introducing the panel, I would like to take a few minutes to highlight some events of the past that have contributed to the present role of the library in the university environment, and to review briefly the emerging mission, as it evolved throughout the 148-year history of our institution.

In 1844, when the New York State bill established the State's first Normal School here, at Albany, the 33,000 citizens of the town were witnessing significant technological changes. It was the period of the mass migration movement through the recently opened Erie Canal, the invention of the telegraph, teletype, rotary printing processes, and a year in which Albany street lighting changed from whale-oil to gas lamp.

In those days, a young person had quite a choice of newly established schools in the Albany area. Union College, established

fifty-nine years before (1785), was a nationally known leader in progressive education. Albany Academy was founded in 1813 and Albany Academy for Girls started a year later (1814). Albany Lyceum opened its doors in 1823, followed by pioneering professional schools, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (1824), Albany Medical College (1838) and Albany Law School (1851). Yet, the library facilities available to Albany scholars and students were very limited. The New York State Library has served most of the city's library needs since 1819. The John Cook's Reading Room and Library at the corner of Pearl and State Street, offered services to paid subscribers only, while a small apprentices library in existence since 1820 restricted its services to teenage apprentices in the mechanical trades only. All of New York State at the time had only twenty-seven libraries "of a public nature, none of much consequence. The combined number of volumes in the libraries of New York City (alone) was not over 12,000 volumes." There were, of course, some small private libraries in homes of prominent citizens, among them a well-known collection of James Kent, "who ... once wrote (that) 'next to my wife, my library has been the source of my greatest pleasure and devoted attachment'."

A comparison of the gradual change of our University and its library missions well illustrates a basic interdependence between the two organizations, reinforcing the hypothesis, that the academic library is as good as the university it serves. The goals of the Normal School were singular: to train teachers

for the public grammar schools, emphasizing a general diffusion of useful knowledge at that level. Teaching took a distinct priority over scholarship. While the intial methods of teaching required a close following of assigned readings, all that was needed from the library was a small collection of currently used textbooks and a reading room facility. The only role of the library at that time was custodial. The mission of our institution as a State Normal College, and later the New York State College for Teachers, expanded to accommodate the emerging needs for secondary education. The training of teachers at the high school level required increased scholarship, by emphasizing, in addition to the methods of teaching, the cultural content of the subjects taught.

Those changes in the scope of the college programs also expanded the mission of the library, by adding to its custodial responsibility, an educational function. The educational role of an academic library rests on the very basic assumption that reading is essential in any educational process, that the bibliographic organization of records of knowledge in the library in whatever format - books, microforms, video-tapes, or computer data - provides an opportunity for research; and that the library collection itself becomes an important instructional tool for the students.

The University status of our school changed its singular mission of the college of education into a multiple purpose institution, providing programs and facilities for general and

professional education at the undergraduate, graduate, and independent research levels. Those changes added research responsibilities to our library mission. The very essence of research, the freedom of inquiry, adds a new dimension to the library operations. It requires an access to comprehensive collections composed of material extended far beyond the facilities offered by any one library. The new mission resulted in a complete redesigning of our library operations, changing a traditional, manually operated library into a fully computerized system planned for the library of tomorrow. In a short period of time the collection increased ten-fold, and the fast expansion of the acquisition, servicing and processing of library materials has continued to the present. Over 1,600,000 patrons entered the library last year, while the collections grew at the rate of 43,000 volumes per year, with a dramatic overall expansion of activities in all departments. As one of the two largest research libraries in the Capital District, our library, with the total collection - including microforms - of over 2,800,000 items, is a major resource for other State and educational institutions, fully implementing our responsibility as an open access library to practically everyone. A recently signed agreement of cooperation with the State Library, an active participation in the Capital District Library Council cooperation, and a renewed review of possible resource sharing with other SUNY Center libraries all provide some indication of our library's regional contribution. The membership in the

Association of Research Libraries, composed of the one-hundred largest research libraries in the country, points to the national prominence of our collections and services. However, there are proverbial dark clouds hanging over our heads. The physical expansion of the last two decades is being accomplished without any significant addition to the library space; the new programs such as the support of the Rockefeller College, the development of archival and special collections, and a provision of advanced bibliographic services are implemented with fast diminishing staff and a budget appropriation that does not keep up with inflation.

Therefore, looking into the future one has to address not only the issues and problems related to the expanding scope of the library's mission and operations, but also to account for the abrupt shift from a seemingly neverending age of continuous resource abundance into a new, unfamiliar period of national austerity, having an especially heavy impact on higher education and academic libraries. Yet, the growth of education in the last century increased the demand for library services far beyond expectations. Social changes are presupposing an informed citizenry, while exponentially expanding information resources challenges the ability of the individual to absorb the new knowledge. Hence, notwithstanding economic restrictions, the future of an academic library - to paraphrase a recent report prepared for the Governor of the State of New York - must be planned in terms of its three basic responsibilities: (1) to

serve as an evidence of our collective cultural vitality by acquiring and preserving the records of our society's past accomplishments, and by providing a milieu for the cultural life of the university community; (2) to provide needed educational tools for developing library patrons' skills and proficiencies in information retrieval which are necessary for meaningful existence in today's society; and (3) to serve as a research instrument in stimulating new knowledge, thus expanding future horizons for human culture and civilization. "We make of our civilization what we wish to make it," the report concludes, "we preserve and enhance it, or we do not."

"The Role of Libraries in a Research University"

by

Warren F. Ilchman, Vice President for Research
and Educational Development

The role I would like to play in this celebration of the millionth volume at the University Libraries at our campus is to think out loud about the role of libraries in a research university, and to do so from a perspective of a person charged administratively with responsibility for relating the library to the institution's mission. My thesis is that the present service orientation of the University Libraries will have to give way to a more assertive leadership role in the future, and that in taking on this more energetic role for the institution some major changes may be necessary.

The thesis requires me to consider what our celebration today symbolizes. Since the Second World War, at least 1,000 new universities have been established across the face of the earth. A high proportion of them purport to be research universities. In many instances, these campuses are a nation's chief effort at keeping pace with the development of world knowledge. (Parenthetically, the whole development of this universalization of higher education and the extraordinary sameness wherever these universities were started and developed are poorly understood and chronicled.) Of the at least 200 research universities founded since the Second World War, I doubt very much that

this or those other research institutions will celebrate their two millionth volume acquisition. I say this not because the publishing industry appears to be languishing. Far from it. Sunday, a week ago, I was one of a third of a million people walking the ten blocks on Fifth Avenue to look at the hundred and seventy-three exhibits at the New York book fair. Also last week, I received my first edition of Harriet Beecher Stowe in the extraordinary new series in the Library of America, volumes on acid free paper and individually sewn to be preserved. Surely this is one of the great publishing monuments of our time. These are only two symbols, among many, that suggest that the two millionth volume celebration may well be likely. Nor has the university - all universities - lost their commitment to the printed word.

The university had at its origins in, and continues vigorously to this day, a commitment to publication which in a sense is so intense and compulsive that a person within the institution does not properly sense it. Virtually from the outset, universities were lobbyists for printing and for literacy. My first recognition of this extraordinary commitment to books and to things printed came when as a dean of arts and sciences, I was concerned about the introduction of, if you will, pictures and noise into the classroom. It is difficult in the extreme. It is not at all surprising that on this and other campuses, art history and musicology are not developed to the extent that their subjects permit. Within the university, it is widely

felt that if it is not printed, if it is not published, if it is not read, it is probably not worth knowing and certainly not true. To say publish or perish really is a more profound characterization of a university than that normally associated with tenure; even in institutions where publication is not required, a faculty that is not published is thought to be highly perishable.

From these three points, you might gather that there will surely be a two millionth volume celebration here and elsewhere; but I wonder if we are not, and I'm sure my colleagues will speak authoritatively to this issue, on the verge of seeing books disappear into master files and memory drums, manipulated by smart terminals and accessed by dumb terminals. How many blips on a Cathode Ray Tube constitute a volume? It seems unlikely that we will have many of these volumes in our library, but we will simply dial up the location where they can be obtained. It is undoubtedly true that much of what we normally call the library's holdings will constitute the computing center's holdings, or the master SUNY computer center holdings, or a network to which we belong. While books seem alive and well, I would think that what has passed for librarianship, and for acquisition, cataloging and circulation of books surely will be substantially different in the future. All of this tells me we will not know when the second million mark is passed.

There is another difference I want to refer to here -- that of the condition of the contemporary research university. The

research library in the contemporary research university really is a phenomenon of a relatively recent period. Indeed. I would argue that it was in the 1950's that the great research libraries were nurtured and developed their style. Those research libraries which began earlier had an easier time of it on the acquisitions side, but a harder time to achieve the behaviors we now expect in university research libraries -- comprehensiveness, service with a knowing smile, a commitment to bibliographically-related technology. In essence, the great research collections on which modern scholarship is predicated, are developments, in many respects, of the last 30 years, particularly in their diffusion across the large number of campuses here and elsewhere that purport to be research universities.

Very important to these developments was the community -- differing in size, needless to say -- of faculty leaders committed to the productive scholarly life. Exemplary among these were the generations of European scholars who came to this country, first under the need to flee Hitler and later to respond to the extraordinary emerging scholarly opportunities our research universities provided. In universities dominated by this rich, vigorous leadership -- Chicago, Berkeley, Harvard, to name only a few -- the university librarians expected that leadership of intellectual life was the responsibility of those faculty and that their role as librarians was to assure the holdings and the access to holdings that this vigorous generation required. In the diffusion of research universities around the world, this

service role of librarians was perpetuated, although that extraordinary community that shaped the modern American research university did not get diffused in any number simultaneously. That vigorous intellectual faculty, acting as a cultivated, cosmopolitan community, especially at the dispersed research universities founded in great numbers in the 1950's and 1960's, is declining.

My generation and our successor generation are less synoptic and more monographic in our orientation. The rich, broad view of culture, the generalized question, the major book, they have all been replaced by the article, the definitive work on a minor person, event, or object. Having run distinguished research lectures at this and other campuses, I know how difficult it is to secure participation from a campus community where members are marked by their specialization and their aversion to generality, by their growing disconnectedness from each other.

Technology -- a term used to summarize what is happening in information retrieval and word processing -- has further broken down that broad intellectual community on which a research university has been and needs to be based. We consider -- I consider -- an important objective for the next few years to have an on-line catalog accessible to faculty in, at best, their own office but, at worst, in a departmental office or some common dispersed site. This means that even coming to a central physical place where ideas are shared and where the corpus of world knowledge is symbolized, will decline. Our commitment to service and real time

speed militate against the nurturing setting that has spawned and sustained research in the past. Our one-time faculty leaders will "access" knowledge in the loneliness of their office, their trusted terminal by their side.

With this vision in mind, and because the health of the modern research university is something very important to me, I begin to see where the emerging research library must play a different role. Rather than exclusively being a server of faculty and student research, university research librarians should accept a more vigorous leadership role where they will identify changing problem definitions of knowledge, where they will make connections between areas of knowledge, for their faculty and student colleagues, for those who would not make them unless the librarians would insist. Lectures, exhibits, symposia will all be tools in this expanded role. To the University Libraries falls the responsibility for providing the cultural leadership for the university that is emerging. If university research libraries here and elsewhere fail, then the anonymous, fragmented scholarly life will persist. One is reminded of Yeats, when he wrote,

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold ..."

I am arguing that my candidate for the "centre" so that things do not fall apart is the University Library.

In taking on a role of intellectual leadership, librarians

are hobbled by three factors. First, the condition of contemporary intellectual life -- fragmented, isolated, monographic, without leadership -- has not been necessarily recognized by those who need it altered and they do not recognize the degree to which they have ceded leadership and left a vacuum. The faculty are not necessarily prepared to accept that the creative cultural role may not be exercised by them exclusively or that there are others to assist. Second, the status of a librarian, especially in the research university, has never been adequately defined and symbolized. How to recognize this important cultural leadership role will be even more devilish. For that role, librarians are different from faculty; they are certainly different from administrators. To achieve a description and a characterization of the energetic, proactive cultural leaders that we wish our university librarians to become, requires a redefining of the status of a librarian at a contemporary research university. Third, given the decades of a service orientation, given the passivity which approval plans and standing orders can induce, can we expect librarians to assume that cultural leadership role? Will they have the stamina, audacity, and chutzpa to do so? I think the political problems of having faculty recognize that they must move over and make room in relation to the cultural leadership of the community and the political status of librarians in the pecking order, even more so, will be more complex to attend to than the latter situation. University research librarians will, in my estimation, awake out

of their service orientation to take the more assertive role. Indeed, they must.

As I confidently opine that we will not know when we will have the two millionth volume, I believe we should make the most of this day and see it as the launching of the vigorous, cultural leadership role this library must play in the future.

"Research in Libraries: A Student's Experience"

by

Cynthia Mazer, Graduate student in History

My first introduction to libraries came when I was five years old, back in Ohio, when I became a member of a children's reading incentive program called the Johnny Appleseed Book Club. Well, I didn't really need much encouragement to read - I loved to read and browse in libraries just as I do now, and since then libraries and books have continued to expand my horizons and open my mind. However, both my expectations about libraries and my needs have changed since my Johnny Appleseed days.

When I came to college and began to try to use the library to do research, I quickly realized that I barely knew how to begin. I had some idea of how to use the card catalog, but beyond that I could not go. It was frustrating, because, looking around, I could see that the library contained many more resources - it was just that I didn't know how to find out exactly what all these resources were, much less how to locate and use them.

My lack of knowledge regarding library use will not be surprising, I'm sure, to any librarian who has spent any time working at the reference desk. And I might add that as a former library employee, a student, and a teaching assistant, I have observed that there are many students who are in this deplorable state of ignorance. The result is, of course, that

these students may not ever discover the vast majority of information that exists on their subject. The student's education is less complete than it might have been. The professor is less satisfied with the student's work. The library, which spends so much time, energy, and money on maintaining information and resources for the benefit of these students, is not being used to its fullest potential.

Furthermore, the ill effects of this situation can extend beyond the undergraduate level, through the graduate level and even beyond. To illustrate: I was a research assistant for IRIS, The Institute for Renaissance Interdisciplinary Studies, which is based here at SUNYA, last semester. One of our projects was to try and determine the methods used by professional historians in doing research. An article written by a librarian who had conducted a survey on this subject concluded that many historians in the United States are unaware of many basic reference tools in their field, and are reluctant for a variety of reasons to utilize the tools they do know about. This state of affairs is obviously a serious matter, since it reflects on the quality of scholarship that is being done in this country. And since new scholars in any given field are trained by their predecessors, the situation can only worsen.

Libraries are developing more and more sophisticated methods of storing information and gaining access to it, a topic which we're going to hear more about shortly. The student or scholar who remains ignorant of these new methods will not be able to

perform well in his or her field. It's that simple.

My plea today, as a student, as a teaching assistant and as a future scholar, is for help. I ask that libraries continue to emphasize the education of their patrons. For example, a one credit library research course that I took here as a sophomore made all the difference in the world for me - and if I had any say in the matter I would make that course compulsory for every student. What I learned in that course literally unlocked doors for me, and has certainly made the experience of doing research a more thorough and a more satisfactory task, if not an easier one. Most importantly, knowing something about the library has increased my awareness of potentials for further research projects, for new directions. The library for me is not a stagnant place, a mere repository, but something ever changing and growing, remaining an integral part of our future world. We need libraries, and the ability to use them well, more than ever.

"Recall-Research-Renewal: A Message of Necessity for the University Library"

by

Richard S. Halsey, Dean, School of Library and Information Science

The research library has the opportunity to assume a newly adumbrated role on the university campus during this period of cultural devitalization and degeneration. This is a time when America's ubiquitous recreational technology and ebbing productivity; its employment of popular but inept solutions to intractable social problems by intellectual and political leaders; its seduction by pragmatism, publicity, and presentism; its diminished expectations of universal education; and manipulation by its own intrinsic dynamism conspire to make it difficult (and seemingly a matter of inconsequential import) to provide definitions of purpose and design for the university library. Nonetheless, it is necessary for the university library to move beyond the limits of the moment's amorphous, easy definitions because of its awesome capacity as a data monitoring and switching station, as a knowledge collecting and dissemination agency.

As I see it, the next step for this venerable institution will be a culminating coalescence of five preceding stages straddling over 2,500 years of tradition. Making a manageable mnemonic, the metamorphoses to date may be reduced to an A through E progression. It is evident that each stage of growth

has been additive, overlapping, not exclusive of its predecessor and that any truly effective research library must somehow account for all five functions in the future if it is to satisfy the requirements of scholarly inquiry.

The first of the five, the A or ARCHIVAL function, is preservation of the cultural accruement, conservation of the fixed, transcribed thoughts, concepts, findings and feelings, the documentation of our collective past. This has been and will continue to be a significant function of the university library lest tragic moments and lost opportunities, the lessons of past great societies and individuals, vanish. As a case in point, it would be much more difficult for us to combat the depersonalization resulting from mass aggregation and technological momentum, to resolve conflicts arising from differing interpretations of the meaning and limits of individual freedom, to deal with the threats of revolutions, hunger revolts, destruction by modern weaponry, without reference to precedents established in the classical world, within our own national history, and in other countries.

After the archival function, the BIBLIOPHILIC role comes next in the progression. The extensive private library has a lustrous past, with eminent bibliophiles including Aristotle, Ptolemy, Mark Antony, the Medici, Charles V and Louis IX, Sir Thomas Bodley, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Clay Folger, Pierpont Morgan, and John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The personal gatherer of books will be with us for as long as the

act of possession survives. Access to books as the whim of the moment or in the silence of the night must be preserved. Who amongst us would not delight in drawing at will for diverse insights upon the works of a Swift, Dostoevsky, Isaac Singer, Faulkner, Henry James, Heissenberg, Euripedes, Shakespeare, or Milton? Reading, intense reading as a desire gratified in hushed seclusion will continue as a necessary asocial, idiosyncratic, passionate, strenuous, solitary independent act. After all, the book is one of the few remaining places where provocative ideas and the extension of human vision can be assayed in privacy without fear of punishment or explosive consequence.

The third state of evolution was the advance of the CIRCULATING library. Its most eminent harbinger was the subscription library, exemplified by the Library Company of Philadelphia, founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731, and Boston Athenaeum, founded in 1807. These in turn led to formation of public libraries, true universities for the people in the growing American republic, vehicles for everyone's upward mobility. Self advancement - this was the novel, quintessentially American rationale for the public library, an institution that would be an instrument, not a repository; an educational rather than primarily a cultural presence in Americans' daily lives. Both the circulating and bibliophilic mutations of the library permitted a freedom of movement with the book that many have pointed out is essential if the reader is to fully recover and appreciate its content, especially if the writer evokes imagined or

reconstructed reality. As the Chinese proverb says, a book may be likened to a garden carried in the pocket to be enjoyed in a sylvan setting. D.B. Wyndham Lewis explored this theme further by suggesting that "to extract the essential soul and flavor of certain books one should endeavour to read them in the exact surroundings in which they were conceived, or in surroundings as nearly similar as may be; for the clear air, the sky, the water are, as it were, mixed with the writer's mind and woven into the very stuff of his imaginings....Herrick should be read in a Devon lane in the time of violets....Rabelais must be read among the rich lands of the Chionnais in Touraine, on the edge of a white road with cornfields and vineyards on either side. But let there be a farmyard near, with a ripe and aromatic muckheap in it, the scent of which must be borne to you on the wind; and let there be also loud bursts of rustic laughter and a bottle of Chinon." Certainly the unleashed reader has the option of selecting and sometimes even modifying the environment in which to wallow in his habit.

The fourth stage in the library's march forward was signnalled by the intrusion of the rapid copier into the formerly machine-free repose of the reading room. Thus was the DUPLICATING-DISPENSING library born and with this came a dramatic change in students' and scholars' research pattern. Instead of spending hours manually transcribing copy from library-held or borrowed materials, one could xerox the desired references and passages and quickly make one's exit. An undesirable

consequence of this increased distance from the total works of cited authors and release from laborious word-by-word transcription has been a more fragmented approach to scholarship and less intimate relationship with the original creation. The drudgery of writing down particular passages and detail reinforces long-term recollection. Hit-and-run copying, rapid quaffing rather than slow sipping surely results in much bouquet, texture, and flavor being lost betwixt cup and lip. Of course what this has meant to the university library is displacement of studiers and users by the sacking-out set. The incidence of intensive involvement with library materials has been reduced with more students occupying lounge furniture than sitting in carrels pursuing solitary intellectual inquiry. As counterfoil to this trend it may be advisable to dedicate more space to faculty seminar rooms and carrels and less to informal furniture, to regain lost ambience by turning from a humming atmosphere to the hushed still of the past.

But of course this proposition is moot because of the onset of the fifth stage of development, the ELECTRONIC library. The telecommunications and computer technologies now pervade, affect, or have begun to drastically mutate the content, design, and governance of libraries, shattering whatever residual calm remained and promising to deinstitutionalize many traditional university library functions. The location and retrieval of resources, their encoding, the transubstantiation of their content into successive concepts, theories, laws, and

interpretation may logically occur completely outside the bounds of the university library physical structure. One can look at this prospect with feelings of exhilaration or trepidation and regret. Fear and regret have scant constructive value and no relevance as the electronic library cannot wholly subsume or cancel out archival, bibliophilic, circulating, and duplicating-dispensing functions.

There are five reasons why dependence upon remote electronic access must remain only partial. These reasons deal with (1) time and its control by the scholar, (2) the environment in which scholarship occurs, (3) the process of knowledge absorption, (4) the properties of subject disciplines, and (5) the nature of human understanding. First off, much scholarly inquiry must be leisurely, inefficient, nonlinear, superficially wasteful in the manner of its accomplishment. Because the cost of remote access is charged by the second, speculative behavior and "time-outs" are disallowed. At least in the humanities, and in those disciplines wherein the proof of theory lies in metaphor or in the originality (ungeneralizability) of the work (e.g., musical compositions and paintings), where precedents and physical/logical/rational statements count for nought, the user of materials is, as often as not, not in control of the information flow. Maurice Merleau-Ponty nicely defines what happens when the polarity of power changes as one reads a compelling author's work. "The reader's sovereignty is only imaginary, since he draws all his force from that infernal

machine called the book, the apparatus for making significations. The relations between the reader and the book are like those loves in which one partner initially dominates because he was more proud or more temperamental, and then the situation changes and the other, more wise and more silent, rules. The expressive moment occurs where the relationship reverses itself, where the book takes possession of the reader....There are two languages with which one must be concerned; first, there is language after the fact, or language as an institution, which effaces itself in order to yield the meaning which it conveys. Second, there is the language which creates itself in its expressive acts, which sweeps one from the signs toward meaning-sedimented language and speech."

The latter expressive language is filtered or aborted in the remote access process. In brief, the transmission of facts, dates, and givens that need no interpretation or exegesis - weather reports, stock quotations, ratio scale quanta conveyed on self-effacing, exclusively "carrier" language - is greatly enhanced by application of information transfer technology, while access to messages in the arts is downplayed because the intrinsic value of the word (if it has any to offer) is sacrificed, at least by the current apparatus which does not facilitate comparisons, conjecture and gradual absorption. Another unintended consequence of removal of the search and retrieval process to sites other than the library will be the hastened loss of the library as a communal zone for scholarly discourse

and acceleration of the trend to monadic thinking, specialization, and fragmentation of disciplines; to researchers' increased separation from cognate domains of knowledge, catalyzed by the arrogance and contempt that some academics display towards their peers. The university nowadays is dominated by competing suzerainties, with that old sense of community dead or moribund. The library has no true constituency in the 1980s. It is viewed in a "let me get mine" mode by contending academic units; it has few allies and many enemies; it is regarded as one of the campus' seemingly insatiable lower intestines rather than as the heart of the university's information exchange and storage system.

Recognition of the library's potential as an intellectual power mobilizer can only occur where there is among librarians and university administrators shared comprehension of the distinctions between information and knowledge, and the manner of their acquisition. The unhurried composting of ideas and their transformation into synthesized, fresh knowledge and additive wisdom should be accommodated by the library. Alas, in much of today's scholarly production, wisdom is shortchanged as the mellowing, aging process for information is abbreviated in the interest of cheap, fast fermentation. Father Walter U. Ong, in The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History, has remonstrated that "knowledge grows by hope, for all knowledge is only arrested dialogue, framed ultimately in speech, in communication....This is fairly easy to see in the case of philosophical knowledge, for example, since

it is easy to feel philosophy as progressing socratically by interrogation and riposte. But it is also true of physical science in its own way: basically, even the latest scientific formulation represents something a scientist has said to some of his fellow men. It is a response to the hope of others, and is itself an expression of hope. It is never mere information. Hope is the difference between information encoded in machines and real knowledge in the consciousness of men."

And the process of knowledge accretion, the locii where this is accomplished, and temporal considerations are in turn conditioned by the nature of subject disciplines. George Steiner, in an essay on the retreat from the word, notes that the writer of today tends to use far fewer and simpler words, both because mass culture has watered down the concept of literacy and because the sum of realities of which we can give a necessary and sufficient account has sharply diminished. This ominous ebbing of the flow from real to inner worlds has taken place at the same time that within the community of scholars the sharing of knowledge has lessened. The biologist and the astronomer look on each other's work across a gap of silence and there is no use trying to explain to the layman the reality - the concepts of modern mathematics or physics. It cannot be done in any honest, truthful way. To do it by approximate metaphor is to spread falsehood and to foster an illusion of understanding. Steiner counsels harsh modesty and admission that common men cannot, in fact, understand most things theoretical. However,

he goes on to insist that we should not accede to fragmentation of knowledge in history, ethics, economics, or the analysis and formulation of social and political conduct.

The final factor that limits the domain of the electronic library is the nature of human understanding and the contexts of its motivation. What Sir Francis Bacon said in his oft-quoted essay, Of Studies, neatly summarizes arguments and implies settings as well. He observed that "studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books." Books for delight one would have as a bibliophile; books for ornament would be borrowed from the circulating library; books for ability and those made ready by deputy and abstracted would be available through remote electronic access systems. At the other end of the gamut of human understandings, far away from the strictly controlled and logically knit pieces that, hung together, comprise the elegant and concise scientific principle or mathematical proof, is the quite different specie of elation that comes with indeterminacy, recognition of unknowns and taboos, and dualities. John Cowper Powys in The Meaning of

Culture warns against easy, single solutions. "The desire to reconcile, to synthesize; the desire to interpret the magical divergencies of things and the issues of things - which are their entelechies and their essences - in terms of vague, colourless, hypothecated neutralities, such as no man has ever seen or will ever see; is a desire against which true culture must always be contending. The petals of life's mysterious flower must always carry upon them the bloom of inexplicable paradox. Their scent, their colour, their very shape, seem always to differ from moment to moment according to a darkness which is so much a thing by itself, and a light which is so much a thing by itself, that we can never behold the substance that changes with their alternation."

Granted the vagaries of scholarly inquiry and humanistic requirements of academe, what will the role of the university library be in the years ahead? The answer must be "all of the above" and more; that is, retention of a meld of functions - archival, bibliophilic, circulating, duplicating/dispensing, and electronic - provided by a library imaginatively shaped and administered to accommodate the entire spectrum of questing modes and timetables, ambiences, disciplines, and knowledge accretion processes I have summarized.

A prime ingredient in this future will be the presence of librarians who can accomplish much that is being currently neglected or mismanaged. Above all, librarians must again assume the initiative by selecting resources, predicating

acquisitions decisions upon real and meaningful factors such as curricular need, prevailing instructional styles - whether socratic or didactic or stressing independent study - faculty research requirements, monitoring of disciplinary trends, reviews by qualified assessors of the literatures, probable appropriateness and utility in those subject territories that are defined as being particularly consonant with the university mission, the need to fill gaps in the existing collections, and intrinsic worth. If the function of the research library is to promote the interaction of human minds through the media of graphic and electronically encoded records, it is axiomatic that the intellectual content of these records must be known and understood by the librarian. This means that the twentieth century labeling of the librarian as docile golden retriever and missionary must yield to classic definition in modern dress, scented in its original essence. The profile of the eighteenth-century librarian limned by Jean Baptiste Cotton des Houssayes in his treatise on The Duties and Qualifications of A Librarian describe the true scholar that should return to us. "Your librarian should possess vast literary skills, an exact and precise knowledge of all the arts and sciences, great facility of expression, and lastly, that exquisite politeness that conciliates the affection of his visitors while his merit secures their esteem." The librarian must regain the skill of recall. The librarian must become a proficient behavioral scientist, developing empathy with researchers across the entire domain of knowledge.

Edward Young's snide surmise must be turned on its head, that is, that "unlearned men of books assume the care, as eunuchs are the guardians of the fair." Librarians and the places in which they perform must undergo meaningful renewal. Librarians must cease their attempt to assume attributes of other professions - education, social welfare, computer science, business administration - and return to their intellectual native land to exercise their proper art and craft. Librarians must go public, writing and speaking out on unaccustomed platforms such as the New York Times, Atlantic, New York Review of Books, Harvard Educational Review, Chronicle of Higher Education, Journal of Communication. The library atmosphere must become less ambiguous, more directive, more suggestive of scholarly intent. Librarians must break free from petty, pointless campus politics and connect to the outer communities they serve as have their colleagues in the elementary and secondary schools, public libraries, corporate and allied cultural institutions.

Whether the university library becomes a charnel house for the skeletons of ideas past, a deserted intellectual chapel, or the main-channel collecting station for information and recorded knowledge and intellectual armament for the oncoming generation of scholars will be decided within the decade. The next step forward will depend upon guidance by emerging leaders, librarians who are scholarly and politic social epistemologists, individuals who are skilled in maximizing the social utility of the world of knowledge. Hats off to these arbiters of human hope and

accomplishment. Maybe this is fantasy, maybe this is fact? Certainly its realization would create a library for recall, research, and renewal; an apt reconciliation with the central purpose of the university.

"The Humanities Scholar Views
Research and Libraries"
by
Martin Kanes, Chair, Department of French

For longer than most of us can recall, scholarly study and research had as its object what was called "an original contribution to knowledge." I suppose there are some who still accept that concept, but to many of us, it now has a strange and archaic sound. It implies that knowledge is a thing, or a body of things, out there in reality; and if we are to be scholars we had damned well better fertilize it and make it multiply.

I think we are more modest today. The New Yorker recently ran a cartoon showing two academics contemplating a memorial plaque to a departed colleague. "Poor chap," sighed one, "he published and published, but he still perished." Yes indeed. We can publish and perish, in more ways than one. For knowledge has turned into a sometime thing. We are no longer as breezily certain that we can see its frontiers. We worry, with Wittgenstein, about whether or not, when we say that King's College is burning, it is burning; or conversely, whether or not a concept can exist if we can't put it into words. Does saying make it so? If a tree falls in a place beyond human ear-shot, was there really a noise? These are old questions that have arisen again with disturbing force. We have begun to learn yet again that pinning down reality is, as my favorite uncle used to say, much like trying to nail jello to a barn wall.

And yet just as the epistemological sands have begun to shift beneath our feet, the computer age has dawned with all its bright and flashing certainties. And I worry. The devil has shrunk to the size of a chip, and temptation now lurks on the no-longer silver screen. I use such terms advisedly, for the computer opens in a new form the ancient faustian lure of knowledge.

Libraries, it seems to me, are at the center of these changes, despite the legendary modesty of librarians. And libraries are central to these issues because they stand squarely at the confluence of two intellectual traditions which are reflected in their structure and organization. On the one hand libraries are seen as "repositories;" that is, garages for pieces of knowledge. The "stacks," one presumes, allow librarians to pile the pieces up (the French word for these buildings is "magasins" -- warehouses, which is even more lyrically descriptive). To this tradition belongs the notion of the librarian's function as "mark and park." This version of the library finds its ultimate modern form in the library-as-information-center, or the library-as-media-center. And it effectively smothers another, and I think, better tradition of the library: the place where one goes to think. This latter tradition is difficult to define, except in indirect ways. One can, after all, think just about anywhere. But libraries, certain libraries, have been able to provide spaces where thinking is optimized. If people here remember the old Pruyn library in downtown Albany,

demolished to make way for a highway interchange, they will know what I mean when I say that there are certain spaces and certain atmospheres that literally urge us to think.

It is interesting and not a little disturbing to look at the way in which these two traditions of the library have intertwined through the ages. In our day, it seems to me, the repository concept has become ever more dominant, and especially with the drive toward computerization. This happens on all levels. On the most trivial, for example, I find it sad that I can't write out my charge slips any more, but must stand patiently while an assistant scrutinizes my book's status -- and presumably my own -- on a terminal screen that I am specifically not allowed to see; or that I have now and again been accused, because of a mis-punched digit, of not having returned a book I never had. I am always secretly delighted when the computer is "down" and I deal with a reading-and-writing person behind the charge desk. Mind you, I am not oblivious to the advantages of computerization, or of putting things "on-line" (forgive me if that phrase always conjures up visions of Monday morning's washing). But speed is almost always the one thing I am not interested in when I go to the library.

The notion of the library-as-repository issues from an underlying concept of knowledge: knowledge as a quantified body of facts, easy to manage, quickly retrievable, rapidly transferable. Its implementation in the on-line catalog demonstrates this admirably. If we know what we are looking for, we

can find it infinitely faster with the on-line catalog, or with a data-base, than with the traditional card catalog. And besides, it's such fun to punch the keys. But the catch is that we must already know what we are looking for. Therein lies the Faustian delusion, and like all such infernal bargains, its advantages are almost always bought at too high a price. Let me elaborate.

If knowledge is not a body of things "out there," what is it? Without entering into deep philosophical discussions, let us assume, as I think we all can, that knowledge is a state of affairs rooted at least as much in the mind as in whatever external reality there is. The trouble with a quantitative approach to epistemology, and with the library concept that reflects it, is that it ignores the role of the mind in the existence of knowledge. Although we flatter ourselves that we can study systematically, or that we can conduct research in orderly and logical ways, the fact is that our minds engage in highly random processes. Indeed, as Thomas Kuhn has shown, the accomplishments of study and research owe as much to chance as to reason. As thinkers, we are not really very sophisticated. This leads me to conclude that those aspects in a library which favor the chancey, rather random and certainly slightly messy process of creating knowledge, ought to be stressed. What are they? Well, in the time we have, I can only point to one which has been important in my own intellectual life; to do so, I hope you will let me return for a moment to my boyhood and my first experiences with a real library.

I grew up in Philadelphia, and our house was across the street from the Wyoming Branch of the Philadelphia Public Library system -- founded, a true Philadelphian must always say at this point, by Benjamin Franklin. That library had marble steps and a card stamping machine on a leather pad that gave a peculiar, muffled and unforgettable thunk every time the librarian charged a book in or out. It also had the first crystal chandelier I had ever seen close up, and waxed linoleum floors that smelled funny and that you slipped on if you didn't take off your wet galoshes in the foyer (which you never did because you rarely got a true pair back together again). But above all that library had silence. It was physical. The air seemed to be thicker than normal; there was a kind of cushion between the reading-room and everywhere else, like the school-yard, or the playground, or the corner candy store. That silence, which prevented one from doing certain things, made it possible for other things to be done. It was like the atmosphere of a temple where secular activities were banned to make way for the sacred. Mostly what went on there, in my case, was browsing.

In reflecting on these things, I have come to conclude that browsing is one of the most important functions of the human mind. My library on Wyoming Avenue had a marble ledge along the walls about two feet off the ground. As your eye roamed along the shelves, you could pick a book out and sit right down there, forgetting the cold sensation on your bottom, and get lost in Dr. Doolittle, or then Treasure Island, or much later

non-Euclidean geometry. The lodge, and the time I spent perched upon it, are among the most prized memories of my childhood and adolescence. I can't quite remember what I did there, other than read, but if Thomas Kuhn is right, and I think he is, I was engaged in one of the most fundamental functions of human intelligence. For if thought and knowledge are chancey, random affairs, then browsing is the central activity, or one of the central activities, of the mind-in-the-library. Browsing is hard to describe: to me it seems a mixture of reading, contemplation -- even dreaming -- tentative excursions toward a possible idea, retreats into what is comfortably known, flashes of insight, excitement, discouragement, nervousness, sleepiness; in a word it includes the whole gamut of mental and emotional states in an indefinable mixture out of which eventually may emerge An Idea. Most people who think about how they think cannot tell you just how a given idea was arrived at. My own favorite author, the French novelist Balzac, called it a "second state": a kind of suspension of thought somewhere down in the subconscious, followed by a sudden emergence into consciousness when conditions are right. And for most modern thinkers, browsing is what provides the right conditions.

Mind you I do not object by any means to the orderly catalog, to the on-line catalog, or even to the data-base. But we must be clear about what they can or cannot do. Above all, we must be clear about the costs which are entailed by the speed and efficiency of quantification and computerization. In a nutshell,

the cost is simply that computerization discourages browsing and the intellectual processes that are included in it. I would argue that it is the effort and time expended upon an intellectual search, and above all the browsing element that is built into it, that provide the space, so to speak, for original thought. One has only to think of the innumerable snags that arrest us in the course of library work: walking one's finger through the card-catalog, and simply having to scan all the items that precede or follow the one we think we want; searching through bibliographies (and the physical time we spend going to and from them, when the mind is idling in an immensely available neutral gear); being arrested and perhaps deflected by an article that is in the same issue of a journal we are consulting for something else; the list could be extended indefinitely. These pauses, reduplications, circlings, repetitions, movements forward and backward, are all part of the browsing, or scanning process conducted by the mind, and my point is that it is precisely the mind that should do the scanning, not a computer. Because scanning, or browsing, is one of the central processes of original thought.

So much for what might be called the "objective" side of intellectual inquiry. So far we have been juggling with bits of information, playing with them as one might play with the pieces of a puzzle. But there is another side to the process, perhaps even more important than the first, and one which moves entirely beyond the domain of computerization. This has to do

with the question of values. The very effort of browsing, when we and not the computer perform it, is a statement of values. To look at its most simple form, we have all had occasion to decide, after a certain amount of searching, that a bit of information we wanted is not worth any further effort. Or, conversely, we may be led to conclude that the bit of information is far more significant than we had at first thought. In both cases, we have been led to change the epistemological structure with which we had begun. Such decisions are taken along the way, as a consequence of our experience, and they are statements of value. They transform the goal of our thought, they can even alter its methodology. These transformations are, I am convinced, fundamental to study and research, as well as to artistic creativity. Artists and researchers are continually surprised at the results of their inquiries; as Lowell, among many others, once said, "How can I know what I want to say until I've said it?" He was pointing to nothing other than what we might call these dynamic transformations. Mulling over the bits of information we play with, is a way of creating and transforming values. It is a way of establishing which concepts and ideas we wish to see dominate over others.

Now to the extent that computerization short-circuits this process by making information ever easier to obtain, it also makes information increasingly value-less. If everything is the same as everything on the little green screen, then value systems become impossible; if everything can be known, nothing

need be learned. And yet even that is a delusion. However tightly the limits of a problem may be drawn, we can never know everything about it. The danger of computerization lies not only in the potential flood of information in which we risk being drowned, but more especially in the delusion of totalism. How easy it is to think that when we have run our program, we know everything we need to know! How easy, when we no longer browse, to take "objective" decisions, and turn totalism into totalitarianism. Let me put it in an admittedly exaggerated way: the fundamental question seems to me to be whether or not modern society can survive what it can potentially know.

So let us be careful. Who knows where it will all end, if we are not? Let me conclude by sharing with you a glimpse of the future I got two years ago, when I was giving Eugene Ionesco a tour of our library. We were down in the technical processing area, and a very kind and cooperative librarian was showing the playwright the computerized capital district location network. Ionesco asked to be shown the locations of The Bald Soprano, and then of Rhinoceros, and then of The King is Dying, then of half a dozen other plays. Title by title, the computer displayed the locations. There was a pause, and I knew something was up. "Now show me," Ionesco asked, "the locations of my next book!" And for a brief second, I thought that he would get them.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Richard S. Halsey, Dean of the School of Library and Information Science, received his B.A. and M.A. in Music Education and Composition from the New England Conservatory. His library degree is from Simmons and his doctorate is from Case Western Reserve University. Halsey has been a free-lance composer, taxi driver, car salesman and chemist in addition to being a librarian. He has been active in governmental and legislative relations with library policy and has participated in numerous lobbying efforts on behalf of libraries. Halsey taught at the University of Toronto library school and was a school library administrator and information scientist. He has published in the areas of non-print media and classical musical recordings. Halsey sees several kinds of libraries and relationships among them: archive library, circulating library, duplicating library, mediated library. He sees libraries in terms of bibliometrics with the rise of the specialist and the decline of the generalist. This is not always seen positively, as he says.

Warren F. Ilchman, Vice President for Research and Educational Development, received his undergraduate training at Brown University in American Studies and was a Marshall Scholar at Cambridge University and got a Ph.D. in history.

Ilchman has published widely in the fields of political economy, population studies, and diplomatic relations. Before coming to SUNYA, Ilchman taught at Williams, University of California at Berkeley, Harvard University, Boston University and was with the Ford Foundation as a program advisor. Ilchman sees research libraries currently as passive in serving the universities; they will have to become active in order to meet the intellectual needs of researchers. Libraries will have to be radically transformed into active, generative organizations. There will be accompanying difficulties which will have to be addressed before libraries can be transformed.

Martin Kanes, Chair of the French Department, received his B.A. from Temple and his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in Romance Languages. He also received a doctorate from the Sorbonne. Kanes has written three books on Zola and Balzac, and has many articles on these authors and others. Before coming to SUNYA, Kanes taught at Penn, the University of California at Davis and the University of California at Santa Cruz. Kanes is concerned with the "fact explosion" and as a humanist worries how libraries, as delicate institutions, can cope with the vast quantity of "new knowledge." He wonders how libraries will balance quality against quantity.

Cynthia Mazer, student in history and the humanities, was born in Indiana, grew up in Colorado and majored in Fine

Art in college. After a stint in the working world at Gimbel's and Macy's in New York City, Mazer returned to SUNYA to pursue a long-time interest in the study of history and the humanities. She has worked in the University Libraries and has been a research assistant for the French Department. Mazer is currently getting an M.A. in History and is also a teaching assistant. Mazer realizes that she knows more about libraries than many students and credits this with her taking the undergraduate library research course which she found very important. She has experienced difficulties getting information and in doing research in French and in History.

Joseph Z. Nitecki, Director of SUNYA University Libraries, was born in Poland and came to the United States in 1951. He received his B.A. in Philosophy from Wayne State, an M.A. in Philosophy from Roosevelt University, and his M.L.S. from the University of Chicago. Nitecki held professional and administrative library positions at the University of Chicago, Chicago City College, the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, Temple University, and the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh before coming to Albany. He is concerned with contemporary library issues and writes on a wide variety of library topics that are of interest to the profession, such as reprography, library history, library administration, and the theory and philosophy of librarianship. Having had both technical duties and managerial responsibilities, Nitecki is able to provide an integrated view of academic libraries as they move into the 1980's.